Borough of South Molton

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH

For the Year 1948

F. J. H. MARTIN,

M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond.), D.P.H.(Oxon),

Medical Officer of Health.

Printed by S. W. LYDDON at the Tower Printing Works, South Molton.

113, *East Street,*

South Molton,

June, **1949.**

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of South Molton.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Administration of the Borough for the year 1948.

Your obedient Servant,

F. J. H. MARTIN,

M.R.C.S.(Eng.), L.R.C.P.(Lond.), D.P.H.(Oxon).

Medical Officer of Health.

South Molton Borough.

LIST OF STAFF.

The Staff of the Public Health Department consists of :—

Part-time Officers :—

F. J. H. MARTIN,
M.R.C.S.(Eng.) L.R.C.P.(Lond.), D.P.H.(Oxon),
Medical Officer of Health.

MRS. ELWORTHY, Clerk.

Whole-time Officer :—

H. SETTLE, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I., Sanitary Inspector.

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Statistics and Social Conditions of Area.

Area in acres	5,910
Population	2,968
Inhabited Houses	896
Rateable Value	£14,442
Sum represented by a penny rate	£60

Vital Statistics.

		Males	Females	Total
LIVE BIRTHS—	Legitimate ...	24	15	39
	Illegtimate ...	1	0	1
				40

Rate per 1,000 population - 15·4

STILL BIRTHS—

There were no still births in 1948.

	Males	Females	Total
DEATHS	13	23	36

Death rate per 1,000 of population - 12·2

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal Sepsis	0
Other Puerperal Cases	0

Below is a Table that shows the comparative figures for South Molton Borough and England and Wales :—

Rate per 1,000 population.			Death Rate per 1,000 population	Infant Mortality Rates per 1,000 live birth	
	Live Births	Still Births		Deaths under 1 year	Deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis under 2 years of age
Souih Molton Borough	15·4	0	12·2	50	0
England and Wales ...	17·9	·42	10·8	34	3·3

Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	1	1	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—
			2

Rate per 1,000 live births - 50

Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births - 51·2

Illegitimate ,, ,, ,, illegitimate ,, - —

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	—
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	—
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ...	—

Causes of Death during the year 1948.

	Males	Females
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	1	—
Cancer of Uterus	—	1
Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum ...	—	1
Cancer of Breast	—	1
Cancer of all other Sites	—	1
Diabetes	—	1
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	1	5
Heart Disease	5	9
Other Diseases of Ciculatory System ...	1	—
Other Digestive Disturbances	1	1
Premature Birth	1	—
Congenital Malformation, Birth Injury ...	1	1
All other Causes	2	2
TOTALS -	13	23

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified in 1948.

Age.	Measles.		Whooping Cough.	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1 ...	—	1	—	—
1 - 2 ...	3	5	—	—
2 - 3 ...	1	5	—	—
3 - 4 ...	9	3	—	—
4 - 5 ...	6	4	—	1
5 -10 ...	19	20	—	1
10 -15 ...	5	—	—	—
30 -35 ...	—	1	—	—
Totals -	43	39	—	2

Tuberculosis.

New Cases notified during the year 1948.

Age.	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
19 ...	1	—	—	—
20 ...	—	—	—	1
21 ...	1	—	—	—
Totals -	2	—	—	1

General Provisions of Health Services in the Area.

HOSPITALS.

1. TUBERCULOSIS.

Hawley Sanitorium, situated in the Borough of Barnstaple, has 28 beds.

2. MATERNITY CARE.

The Devon County Council is continuing to act as they did in 1947, as Agents of the Regional Hospital Board, until the Board has completed its own plans for the treatment of Maternity cases.

The South Molton Cottage Hospital is functioning as usual, and is now under the North Devon Hospital Group, and deals with a certain number of Maternity cases.

There is also a Ward of 15 beds, with a fully-qualified staff, at the North Devon Infirmary, Barnstaple, available for cases of doubt or difficulty.

3. ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Tiverton Isolation Hospital is closed and the cases are now sent to the Bideford Isolation Hospital, which is situated just outside the Borough of Bideford. It is of recent construction and well-equipped in every way for the treatment of Infectious Diseases. It comprises 32 beds (six of which are in observation cubicles) and four cots.

4. SMALL POX.

The Small Pox Hospital to which any cases of Small Pox will be sent is the Swilley Isolation Hospital, Plymouth, and the ambulance will be obtained from Tiverton.

5. GENERAL.

The South Molton Cottage Hospital, situated in the Borough, deals with Medical and Surgical Cases, in addition to Maternity Cases.

The North Devon Infirmary, situated in Barnstaple, also serves the Area and provides modern Medical and Surgical treatment available to the residents of the district.

In South Molton there are 29 beds available at Beech House for the Chronic Sick.

A Blood Bank has been established at North Devon Infirmary.

6. CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

V.D. CLINIC.—This is held at the Annex of the North Devon Infirmary.

SESSIONS.

	Females.	*Males.*
Mondays -	4.0 p.m.	5.15 p.m.
Thursdays -	4.30 p.m.	5.45 p.m.

TUBERCULOSIS CLINIC held at North Devon Infirmary.

SESSIONS.

Tuesdays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.	Clinic and X-ray Examinations.
Thursdays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.	
Fridays -	9.0 a.m. - 1.0 p.m. 2.0 p.m. - 4.0 p.m.	A.P. refils.

7. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The Laboratory is situated at 7, Dix's Field, Exeter, and is in charge of Dr. Moore. It is completely installed with the necessary equipment for bacteriological examinations of all kinds. Its Diagnostic and Consultative Services are available for all patients, and it undertakes the Analysis of Drinking Water and Milk.

This Service is extremely valuable and is widely used by the Medical Practitioners in your District.

8. PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOMES.

There is a District Nurse living and practising in the Borough, and there is also a private practising Midwife living in the Borough.

9. AMBULANCE SERVICE.

Under Sec. 27 of the National Health Service Act, 1946, the Local Health Authority (*i.e.* the Devon County Council) is responsible for the provision of an Ambulance Service, and the Devon Health Committee have arranged for this to be provided through the Agency of the St. John Ambulance Association. Under the scheme, an Ambulance Post has been established at South Molton, which is staffed by volunteers. The District served is South Molton and South Molton Rural District.

Water Supply.

The supply is obtained from the gathering grounds on the foothills of Exmoor, and is impounded in the Holywell Reservoir which contains approximately 7,000,000 gallons. It is piped therefrom to the filter house at Westland Bridge and is passed through three "Candy" Pressure Filters and thence by trunk main of 6 ins. diameter to the Service Reservoirs at North Road, South Molton, the Service Reservoirs being two in number and containing 340,000 gallons; the water is then distributed through the town mains of varying diameters. The water is analysed at regular intervals and the Analyst's Reports are still very satisfactory, the general description being that the water "is of a high degree of chemical and bacteriol purity." I find that the Filters and system generally are maintained in a highly efficient manner by the employee in charge. There is a Chlorination Plant at the Service Reservoirs which has now been re-conditioned and which is working satisfactorily. Filters are in good order.

Sewage Disposal.

The existing Sewage Disposal Works are still incapable of properly treating the sewage, and the provision of the new disposal works should be put in hand as quickly as possible as the conditions both at Mole Bridge and West End are extremely bad, and there does not appear to be any way of improving the present works unless at considerable cost. Any expense incurred in this way would be wasted as it could not form a part of the new Sewage Disposal Scheme.

Housing.

16 Traditional Houses were erected and tenanted during the year on the Hugh Squier Estate.

16 Cornish Unit Houses are in the course of erection and should soon be completed.

2 Private Dwelling-house has been erected during the year.

4 Private Bungalows are in the course of erection.

Sanitation.

Number of Houses inspected	15
Number of Preliminary Notices served under Public Health Acts	10
Number of Statutory Notices served under Public Health Acts	6

The chief defects that have been dealt with are:—

Roofs repairs and made watertight.
Stoves and Cooking Apparatus renewed.
Lavatory Pans renewed.
Drain cleared.
Generals repairs to walls, ceilings and floors.

Refuse Collection and Disposal.

Domestic refuse is collected regularly in the built-up area of the Borough and monthly collections are being arranged for the outlying farms and Hamlets. Refuse is carted to the dump at Hacche Road. A further piece of land has been fenced in and this will provide tipping space for about a further two years. The old tip has been levelled by bulldozer and has been cleaned up. The dump is regularly treated for the destruction of Rodents.

Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919, and Orders.

The following methods for the destruction of Rats and Mice are taken:—The Refuse Tip at Hatche Road, the Sewage Outfall Tanks at Mole Bridge and West End Terrace are periodically treated by pre-baiting and then with poisoned baits and the results are satisfactory. A number of private houses and business premises have been visited on receipt of complaints, and disinfestation has been carried out.

Inspection of Meat and other Foods.

Meat supplies have been regularly inspected on arrival at the Pannier Market, and all unsound meat has been seized and destroyed after consultation with the Authorities at Barnstaple. The method of transporting and general handling of the meat is, however, not at all satisfactory, and complaints are frequently made to the Authorities, but do not result in any improvement.

Bakehouses.

Bakehouses are inspected periodically, and they are generally found to be in good order.

Factories and Workshops.

Factories and Workshops are inspected periodically and are found to be kept as required by the Factory Act. Some improvement have been carried out.

Ice Cream.

All the premises inspected in which Ice Cream is made have been inspected regularly, and we are pleased to report that generally the conditions are sutisfactory, and that we find that retailers are very willing to accept our advice and to make such improvements in premises and methods of handling we may from time to time request. Sampling is carried out by the County Council.

I desire to thank the Town Clerk and Mr. Settle for their valuable help to me.

F. J. H. MARTIN.